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## **Person deixis and impersonation in Iain Banks's *Complicity***

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*Complicity* (1993) written by the Scottish writer Iain Banks (1954-2013) belongs to the category of the thriller novels. It is in the vein of the author's first novel, *The Wasp Factory* (1984), also depicting a vicious serial killer. But *Complicity* is stylistically remarkable<sup>1</sup> for its alternation of narratives featuring two different protagonists: a journalist for the Caledonian newspaper, Cameron Colley, investigating murders, whose narrative is in the first person, and a murderer relating his crimes with graphic details in the second person.<sup>2</sup> Presented as widely apart at the beginning, the threads of the two protagonists-narrators' lives start to interlace as the novel unfolds. Without prior warning, there is a continuous shift between the protagonists' narratives from one chapter to the other and even within the same chapter. The readers have then no other choice than to turn into 'forensic linguists', leaning on textual fingerprints to determine which frame of mind they are in. Combined with other linguistic markers, the personal pronouns are of course particularly helpful, except when, at one point in the novel, one of the narrators stages what I call stylistic impersonation, bringing about confusion regarding the identity of the protagonists. At the end of the novel, adding to the mirror-effects created by the I/you dyad, the 'I' protagonist-narrator switches to the second-person pronoun that has so far been the stylistic preserve of the assaulter.

The general aim of this paper is to highlight the psycho-cognitive and pragmatic effects produced by the pronominal alternation between what seems to be two opposite 'mindstyles' (Fowler 1977). It will more specifically determine the reason why Iain Banks uses the second person pronoun in his novel and, compared with other potential personal pronouns, what position it pragmatically constructs for the reader. Drawing on the psycholinguistic-oriented approach of text processing adopted by Sanford and Emmott in their 'Rhetorical Processing Framework' (2012), I will also delve into how readers tend to mentally process *Complicity*, by trying to exhibit the mental representations they are led to build from the stylistic devices finely chosen by the writer.

### **1. The pragmatic paradoxes of the second person pronoun**

In his 1993 book on language and point of view, Paul Simpson left it to the reader to decide whether there should be added, besides his category A (novels written in the first person) and Category B (novels written in the third person), a category C that would gather what is called *odd pronominal narratives* (Simpson, 1993: 78-9). If Category C is used, it can display the positive, negative and neutral

modal shading that Simpson elaborates in his modal grammar of point of view. As a matter of fact, if the focus is on 'you' narratives, they do show these three types of shading, as can easily be evidenced (see Sorlin, 2014). The only problem facing Category C, if it is to be considered along the same lines as the other categories, is that generally the second person pronoun can hardly be said to have a stable reference.<sup>3</sup> Indeed as opposed to the first person singular for instance,<sup>4</sup> the reference of the second person can be multiple (see Fludernik, 1993, 1994, 1996): it could refer to the reader, an internal addressee, people in general, it can denote a fictional protagonist and/or can be a form of self-address.

If, as Gérard Genette indicates, every third-person narrative always implies the presence of an 'I' that is at the origin of the enunciative act (Genette, 1972: 252), the same can often be said of first-person narratives where the 'I' can be construed as a 's/he': under the speaking 'I' saying 'I', there is someone about whom something is said, that is to say a 'self' that is *me* and that can be considered as a third person (Joly, 1990: 21). This disguised similarity between first and third person seems to leave the second person aside—for Genette (1983/1988: 133), second person narratives are 'a rare but very simple case' that he integrates in his heterodiegetic category. If, on the plane of enunciation, 'I' and 's/he' can be considered similar, where can the second-person pronoun be situated? In novels where the second person notionally corresponds to a first person,<sup>5</sup> operating what Uri Margolin (1986: 190-9) calls a 'deictic transfer', can second-person narratives be said to be part of Simpson's category A (novels written in the first person)? Yet if this particular case is melted in the broader category A, what can be said about novels like Banks's *Complicity* which present alternative use of 'I' and 'you' referring to two different persons? Here especially, the play on the I/you dyad turns out to be at the very heart of the plot. Rather than embodying discursive intersubjectivity as described by Benveniste (1974: 82), the I/you dyad in *Complicity* indeed exhibits, as I shall demonstrate, complex psychological (dis)connections between 'self' and 'other'.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1. Depersonalised persona: the neutralisation of subjectivity

The passages figuring 'you' in the novel are written in a 'neutral' mode that seems to near writing degree zero. Grammatically, they are marked by a quasi absence of modality, privileging confident grammatical assertions. Here is an extract chosen at random from the very beginning:

Then the door closes and they are there in front of you and in that instant you see him turned slightly away, putting his briefcase down on the table beside the answer-machine. The girl—blond, tan, mid-twenties, holding a slim briefcase—glances at you. She does a double-take. You are smiling behind the mask, putting one finger up

to your lips. She hesitates. You hear the answer-machine spin back, squeaking. As the girl starts to open her mouth, you step forward, behind him.

You swing the cosh and hit him very hard across the back of the head, a hand's width above his jacket collar. He collapses instantly, falling against the wall and down over the table, dislodging the answer-machine as you turn to the girl. (Banks, 1994: 6)

The cold, detached style is produced by specific linguistic choices made by the narrator, in terms of tense (the present tense, evincing a minimum characterisation of the process, creating a moment-to-moment description) and processes (concrete material processes referring to the actions performed, relational processes describing the physical surroundings and perception processes involving bodily senses). Apart from non-finite nominal subordinate clauses, the syntax makes mostly use of parataxis and coordination—in the first 'you' passage for instance (3-9), only five subordinate clauses can be found introduced by the conjunction 'as' and 'though'. All the 'you' passages in the book are written in the same type of style, often producing a binary hypnotic rhythm: 'you put a ten-centimetre strip across her mouth and leave the kitchen, putting the light out and closing the door' (8), 'The hotel is dark and very quiet' (176).

In her analysis of personal pronouns in English, Katie Wales insists on the inherently 'egocentric' orientation of 'you', even in its most impersonal uses. For her indeed even generic 'you' is inherently subjective: 'a speaker's observations on life will invariably be coloured by their subjective attitudes and experience' (Wales, 1996: 78). Yet in this novel the 'you' protagonist-narrator precisely sees to it that no subjective clues about himself transpire in his narrative. Just as he is careful not to leave any fingerprints on his crime scenes, his narrative tends to erase any linguistic fingerprints that might reveal something about his (social and geographical) identity, his motivations or his emotions. The second person pronoun seems a means to adopt a 'persona' behind which the criminal can hide himself. The 'you mask' is somehow the grammatical equivalent of the real mask he is wearing in order not to be identified. To use Collins and Postal's term in *Imposters. A Study of Pronominal Agreement* (2012), 'you' is here definitely an 'imposter': it is notionally a first person and grammatically a second one.<sup>7</sup> But there is a sense in which this grammatical imposture mirrors a more psychological camouflage. The pronoun 'you' operates here a distancing effect which allows the protagonist not to put too much of himself in the narrative. What he performs are controlled 'acts of identity'<sup>8</sup> in his desire to project the image of the rational assaulter who perfectly knows what he's doing: 'you decide to stick to the plan. It's important; it shows that you are not just some nutter, and the extra risk lifts you onto another plane of chance and luck' (58-9).

### 1.2. Between distance and complicity: the defamiliarising familiarity of 'you'

A high level of construction marks the narrator's very controlled narrative. Indeed although the 'you' passages can be said to be, narratologically speaking, interior monologues, they can hardly be compared with stream of consciousness novels where intimate thought is expressed without any addressee in mind or prior construction. In novels like Joyce's *Ulysses* where Molly's monologue can be said to be the epitome of the genre, the fragmented syntax mirrors the irrational meanders of thought, flowing at the whim of the narrator's memories or associations of ideas. In *Complicity*, the second person sections are too self-conscious to be mere records of irrational thoughts. Besides, they share the high degree of artificiality pointed out long ago by Dorrit Cohn about first-person narrators of interior monologues: 'forced to describe the actions they perform while they perform them, they tend to sound like gymnastics teachers vocally demonstrating an exercise' (Cohn, 1978: 222).<sup>9</sup> In Banks's novel, the protagonist describes the performance of his crimes, as if narration and action could coincide. He is describing *and* commenting on his actions, using what could be called 'metaperformatives': 'you hesitate for a second, then walk normally to the stairs and go down them with a fairly quick, heavy tread, whistling', 'you already know what you're going to do, how you're going to play this' (35).

But the interior monologues that Cohn's comment above refers to are first-person narratives, like Dujardin's *Les Lauriers sont coupés* for instance. Is the effect the same with second-person narratives? It seems that the uncommon, surprising choice of the second person accentuates the high artificiality of such an unnatural narrative technique. For the Free Indirect Speech specialist, Monique de Mattia-Viviès, the 'I' of interior monologues is in fact a disguised third person:

It is as if we were dealing with a masked temporal back-shifting that does not appear in the tense used but that shows in the construction, through the self-description, of an 'object-of-discourse I' out of touch with the 'I' describing her own acts. The protagonist looks at herself, as if she was watching again the film of which she is the main actress. (de Mattia-Viviès, 2006: 211, my translation)

So the 'I' of interior monologues introduces a distance between the 'I' who describes the acts and the 'I' who is the object of discourse, making the latter akin to a third person. It could be illustrated thus: I → he. As said earlier, 'you' tends to put the self (I) at a distance through the deictic transfer it effects: I → you. As a consequence, in second person interior monologues, 'you' seems to occupy a position in between traditional first and third person pronouns. To recap, the intermediary position of 'you' can be thus illustrated:

I → **he** ('I' as third person in interior monologues)  
I → **you** (the deictic transfer of self-address)  
Hence: I → **[you]** → **he** ('you' in interior monologues)

It could be argued indeed that the second person pronoun adds here another link to the chain that separates further the enunciator from the acting protagonist.

However, the distance created by 'you' between narrating self and narrated self is counterbalanced by an effect of proximity with the reader produced by the second person. Indeed as Wales points out,<sup>10</sup> 'you' (like 'we') 'has a strong interpersonal base, speaker- or addressee-oriented, reflecting *we* and *you's* origins' (Wales, 1996: 59). In some sort of pragmatic paradox, the readers cannot help feeling addressed while knowing perfectly well they are not (directly). In the staging of his crimes, the protagonist-narrator seems indeed to give advice to the reader on 'how to do this...' and 'what to avoid...' in order to obtain a high degree of perfection in crime:<sup>11</sup> 'you go into the bedroom, checking the position of the mirrors; none of them ought to show you to anybody in the bathroom' (163). 'Spirited' into the narrative through the second person pronoun, readers are placed as 'in-siders', in the heat of the action, watching the scene from behind the protagonist's mask. His extremely precise descriptions, saturated with specific geographical and physical details, enable the readers to visualise everything as if they were there. 'You' does not directly interpellate them and yet it seems to require their complicity—in echo of the title of the book—since a form of intimacy is inevitably forced upon them: they are indeed the only ones who have access to the mind(style) of the assaulter while the others (journalists and policemen) arrive after the crime has been committed.

Textual 'You' seems here to pertain to the last of the five functional types identified by David Herman (1994: 378-411): what with the total agreement between the grammatical form and its deictic function ('you' addressing a narratee or the reader in a direct apostrophe, first and second type)<sup>12</sup> and total disagreement (when 'you' embodies a deictic transfer or has a generic meaning close to 'one', third and fourth types), Herman theorizes yet another intermediary type ('doubly deictic you') that would evince neither complete agreement between form and function nor complete discord between them. In this case, the reader is clearly not the referent of the second person and yet he/she<sup>13</sup> paradoxically is. In Collins and Postal's terms, it could be said that 'you' 'obtains its 2<sup>nd</sup> person value from ADDRESSEE functioning as a secondary source' (Collins & Postal, 2012: 223). In *Complicity*, the readers are both excluded from narration while at the same time being included into it, whether they like it or not. The reader is summoned to

occupy the impossible double posture of exterior observer and addressee captured into the narrative (Herman 1994).

Where Herman speaks of 'double deixis' I would rather speak of 'metaphorical you', basing myself on Ricoeur's definition of metaphor as what 'is and isn't' at the very same time<sup>14</sup>: 'you' clearly isn't the reader and yet it metaphorically is—this ties in with Wales's remark that every personal pronoun should be interpreted 'rather in the same way as we interpret metaphors' (Wales, 1996: 83), especially in case of imposture where the 'literal', morphological reference is at odds with the notional, semantic one (Collins & Postal, 2012). The same second person pronoun manages to perform two contrary effects in *Complicity*, that of distancing on the one hand and of bringing closer on the other: the protagonist-narrator is distancing himself from the subject that commits these crimes as if to get himself off the hook and shifting the blame onto some other 'you persona' and there is at the same time some kind of *metaphoric transfer* onto the reader. The distancing from the narrating 'I' is indeed commensurate with the *rapprochement* with the reader that the second pronoun inevitably initiates. The metaphorical encroaching upon the 'zone of the reader' is what is particularly defamiliarising when reading. This getting closer to the readers is also what makes possible the rhetorical manipulation of their emotions.

### 1.3. Manipulating emotions

This staged complicity predisposes the reader to adopt a certain point of view. In the suspense created by the narration, with some events not going the way the protagonist predicted, the readers can surprise themselves wanting him to succeed as if the forced complicity was working on them: this 'participatory response' (Allbritton and Gerrig 1991) is for me elicited by the 'you' construction. In addition, despite the obvious unlawful actions of the 'you' protagonist, the reader gets a sense that the victims deserve their plight as they are powerful people implicitly described as involved in amoral issues and getting away with them because of their high social status. In fact the reader's reactions to the text are rhetorically manipulated. For instance, the victims' pain is always reported in a very 'cold' mode: never is the reader brought to vicariously experience the pain of the other, through what Sanford & Emmott (2012: 201) call 'hot cognition'.<sup>15</sup> By contrast, the description of the victims' painful response to violence is interspersed with technical or poetic comments, as in this long passage on the specific syringe used:

The syringe is a big mother; not like those dinky little disposable plastic things medics and junkies use. This device is made from stainless steel and glass; it has two

hook-shaped finger-grips on either side of the barrel and it holds a fifth of litre. You hold the medicine bottle sealed with cling-film upside down and slip the slanted tip of the big syringe needle into the clotted-cream-coloured liquid inside the bottle. Mr Oliver is still screaming behind the gag. (89)

The positive connotations of some poetic descriptions divert the reader's attention from the terrible deed just committed as if nothing happened:

It's sunset when you leave, locking the quiet house securely behind you. The sun flames orange and pink behind the trees above the house, the breeze is cool rather than cold, scented with flowers, the sea, and you think what a pleasant if rather bland place this could be to settle down. (168)

Distractions of various kinds can interrupt the description of violent acts: 'The music is loud. It's a Eurythmics song called Sweet Dreams are Made of This' (163).

Furthermore, the narrator's very detailed descriptions tend to uglify the bodies of the victims the aggressor is either sodomizing or infecting with AIDS, which deprives them of all dignity. Here, for instance, the victim's fart brings an implicit element of disgust or irony that deflates the horror being performed: 'He moans and farts at the same time. You have to turn your head away from the smell, but you push the vibrator in further. You can hear seagulls crying outside, beyond the closed curtains' (38). With the repeated crimes, like in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, the reader seems to get familiarized with highly unsettling descriptions. The pronoun 'you' sometimes seems to address the reader directly as a reading accomplice that should by now be familiar with pain and screams: 'He moans, then his eyes open slowly and he sees you and tries to move but he can't. He screams down his nose. You are becoming familiar with men making this noise now' (103).

What clearly evinces the degree of manipulation undergone by the reader through the protagonist-narrator's rhetoric is the fact that when the criminal's acts are shown or described to the other narrator of this novel, Cameron Colley (the 'I' protagonist-narrator), he can't help vomiting and being haunted by the gorilla mask for days on end. This is unlikely to be the perlocutionary effect produced on the reader by the 'you' narrative. The discrepancy between the responses is rhetorically managed, the use of the second person pronoun contributing highly to the double contradictory effects evidenced above: the effect of emotional detachment from the acts on the one hand, enabling the protagonist to coldly put his acts at a distance, and that of 'conative solicitude' (Bonheim, 1982) on the other, with the 'decidedly involving quality' of the pronoun (Fludernik, 1994: 286).



## 2. Scenario mappings and mental processes

In *Complicity*, the narration switches narrators without warning. In order to understand which ‘footing’ (Goffman, 1981) they are on, the readers must look for references to time, place and movement and other linguistic footprints like personal pronouns, or sociolinguistic markers like register, dialect and idiolect. For in these respects, the two protagonists-narrators’ mindstyles could not be further apart. Cameron’s style is unmistakable with its colloquial register and journalese jargon. His lexicon is also sprinkled with terms appertaining to the world of the video game he is particularly fond of:

No waste! No fat! Just exactly the right, most elegantly eco-optimum system—as near to state-of-the-art as I could afford at the time, barely a year ago and I’m still paying the now quite superseded bastard off—to run this stunningly Machiavellian turbo-screamer of a game; an instant classic, easily a year ahead of its time and just possibly better than sex. (52)

Compared to the ‘you’ narrator, Cameron gives a profusion of details about his emotions, his sex life and his addiction to drugs, cigarettes and alcohol: ‘I have another whisky and a bowl of Coco Pops with lots of milk. My hand keeps reaching for the place where the cigarette packet would normally be, but I’m coping with the cravings and surviving so far. I really want some speed but I know if I have any I’ll want a cigarette afterwards, so I leave it alone’ (55). So the readers know which ‘frame’ they are in thanks to lexical and sociolinguistic elements that construct a particular mental space.

### 2.1. Style impersonation and deception

However, at one point in the narrative, a passage in the first person is recognizably written in the neutral mode of the ‘you’ narrator, as it describes the spatial surroundings of someone about to commit a crime in the same moment-to-moment description that the reader has become used to associating with the aggressor:

The wind is loud in the leaf-bare branches overhead. I head down the track to the road, then look back to the car; it’s almost fully hidden. I cross the tarmac and climb a fence, than take the ski-mask from my trouser-pocket and pull it over my head. I follow the line of the hedge along the side of the road, ducking once as a car drives past on the road; its headlights sweep along the hedge above me. The car carries on into the night. I start breathing again. (125-126)

In addition, some elements are recognizable from previous 'you' passages, like the gloves, the mask and interjections like 'shit!' that the 'you' protagonist often uses when something goes wrong. As Emmott (2003: 145-146) indicates, there are several types of knowledge that the reader relies on in order to build mental representations of the text: general knowledge, knowledge of typical text structures, text-specific knowledge of a particular fictional world and knowledge of the style of a particular text. Here it seems that the writer wants the reader to focus on text-(and style)-specific knowledge as what is being described seems to fit in the Text World (Werth 1999, Gavins 2007) constructed in the reader's mind from the accumulated contextual information. The reader is made to believe that the actions performed are those of the assaulter.

Sanford and Emmott's 'Rhetorical Processing Framework' is of help here to grasp how the reader's attention is psychologically controlled (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 5).<sup>16</sup> In an automatic psychological process, the readers relate the mental representation of the discourse they are reading to something that they already know; this is the principle of the *Scenario-Mapping Theory* (Sanford & Emmott 18): 'The strongest processing assumption of the Scenario-Mapping Theory is that the reader automatically seeks out a known situation (scenario) to which a text is referring, what Sanford and Garrod [1981, 1998] termed *primary processing*, leading to basic understanding. Wherever possible, text is mapped onto the scenario' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 20-21). The 'mental models' the reader has formed are brought up whenever similar contexts come up: 'The basic suggestion was that mental representations of a discourse are formed by relating what is being read to a situation that the reader knows something about already' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 21). In the passage quoted above, the writer seems to want the reader to map the passage onto the familiar scenario of a (future) crime scene. Within Sanford and Emmott's psycho-linguistic framework, this corresponds to what they call the *Rhetorical Focussing Principle*, that is to say 'the idea that writers aim to focus attention on selective aspects of a text, causing some parts of the text to be processed more thoroughly than others' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 101).

Given the known scenario and its characteristic style, we may expect the reader's attention to focus on 'selective aspects' of the text and to overlook certain anomalies in the picture: the first-person pronoun for one thing, the fact that the narrator-protagonist uses a car and not a bike as the murderer usually does. Even more surprising is the fact that he finds a key to open the back door ('I feel the putty, then the embedded key and its short length of string. I take hold of the string and pull gently. The key comes out, clinking quietly once. I put my glove back on', 127). The protagonist's taking off his muddy shoes before going to the bedroom where a woman is sleeping might, on re-reading, sound like a clear anomaly for a

murderer but at this stage the reader is likely to be ready to find alternative explanations that fit in the familiar scenario: he took off his shoes to reduce potential noise for instance. The research carried out by psychologists to explain the difficulty in detecting anomalies evinces that readers fail to detect them when they *seem* to 'fit the global context well' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 107). The 'shallow processing' of the information that is clearly anomalous at the 'local level' is due to the fact that it seems to fit already known text structures and general context: 'the outcome of shallow processing is an *underspecified mental representation* of the text that is shallow processed' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 104).

At the sudden appearance of the inclusive first person plural pronoun (*we*), the reader is led to infer that the rapist and the woman in fact know each other:

She comes screaming; I don't think I'm going to but then I do.  
We collapse together onto the bed, breathing in time. I pull myself out of her.  
There is a faint smell of shit. I undo the handcuffs and lie there, holding her. She pulls the ski-mask from my head.  
'Where are your shoes?' She whispers after a while.  
'In the kitchen,' I tell her. 'They were muddy. Didn't want to make a mess.'  
She laughs quietly in the darkness. (130)

All along Cameron has impersonated a rapist to fulfil one of his mistress's sex fantasies. What is unsettling for the reader is that the first-person narrator has usurped the writing degree zero of the 'you' narrator. At this point in the narration, the stylistic imposture has the effect of planting seeds of doubt as to the identity of the 'you' character: is the 'I' and 'you' protagonists one and the same character after all?

As reading goes on, the criminal's identity takes shape: suspicion is likely to crystallise around Cameron's childhood friend, Andy, presented as a reformed capitalist that has gone from huge wealth to a very modest life. When the reader is quite convinced about this deduction, the 'you protagonist' enters Andy's house describing it as if he was seeing it for the first time. He approaches a sleeping person and kills him with a log. Of course in these circumstances, the reader is led to believe the victim is Andy. The policeman confirms Andy's death to Cameron who is in prison, accused of the aggressor's crimes. The reader is at this point unlikely to take in the hints dropped by the 'you' narrator: 'You bring the log down with all your might. It hits his head and you don't hear the noise it makes because you cry out at the same time, as though it's *you* in the bed, *you* being attacked, *you* being killed' (177, my emphasis). In order to get away with his crimes, Andy has faked his own death, killing a friend he had put up for the night and setting fire to

his own house. The way Iain Banks has constructed his narrative often brings the reader to 'wait and see', as primordial information comes up sparingly. Indeed as Sanford and Emmott underline, when the information given in a novel cannot be mapped onto an appropriate scenario, 'secondary processing occurs'. This can take several forms<sup>17</sup> like 'putting unresolvable input on a "wait and see" list' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 38).

Slowly Andy's personality gains in psychological complexity leading the reader to understand that the way Cameron has presented his friend Andy ('my old soul-mate, my surrogate brother, my other me', 29) is a far cry from the way the latter has lived out his relationship with Cameron: the linguistic and pragmatic reciprocity of the I/you dyad put forward by Benveniste in canonical situations of interlocution gives way here to a marked psychological dissymmetry between the ways the characters have respectively perceived their alter ego. What has been repressed by Cameron (the 'ice incident', Andy falling in an ice hole and Cameron being too shocked to go and rescue him) along with the psychological impact of Andy's sister's death and other painful shared events, are slowly coming up to the surface and ultimately lead Cameron, and the reader as well, to realise that Andy is the one who set him up. Disguised, Andy manages to kidnap Cameron after sabotaging his car. Andy offers Cameron two options: call the police right away with the phone Andy has left him or choose not to betray him once again and let him go. Cameron calls his doctor instead.

### 2.3. *'You' and depth of processing*

'You' returns in the last chapter of the novel (chapter 13) but this time with Cameron as protagonist-narrator. In Banks's characteristically misleading style, the 'sentence fragment'<sup>18</sup> ('tennis ball'), in the paragraphs quoted below, may lead the readers down some garden-path reasoning (they might think of something playful) that needs to be 'repaired'<sup>19</sup> in the following sentence:

A tennis ball.

They say it's about the size of a tennis ball. You slide your hand inside your coat and jacket and press up under the floating rib on your left side. Pain. You're not sure whether you can feel it, the thing, the growth itself or not; you cough a bit as you press, and the pain gets worse. You stop pressing and the pain eases. (310-311)

Here as well, the second person pronoun seems to bring about some distancing effect between the self and the topic, that is a painful, depressing one here (Andy later learns he has cancer). It seems that 'you' creates a specific zone where emotions are put at a safe distance from the character and reader alike. As the self-address pronoun communicates here on a personal situation (Cameron's) but one

that could be shared by the reader at a more generic level on the mode 'imagine you...', the paradoxical final effect seems to be a more intense rendering of emotions that are paradoxically put at a farther distance.

When using the second-person pronoun, Cameron sounds as if he does not belong to his former self any more, the 'I' of the past has given way to a more lucid 'you' apprehending things from a different light, seeing the world in an alien, antagonistic way. This switch from 'I' to 'you' thus reflects this psychological estrangement that tends, in the end, to bring him closer to his former soul-mate Andy and to the latter's bitterness about the world gone mad. As Leslie Jeffries points out in her analysis of pronouns and point of view in contemporary poetry, 'you' seems to be particularly appropriate for depressed and anxious narrators: 'It would be premature to assume that all such uses of "you" as the sole deictic centre of poems were equally anxious or depressed, though my data does bear out this interpretation' (Jeffries, 2013: 188).<sup>20</sup> Here, in the last words of the novel, the disease brings Cameron to a new emotional detachment, as he gives up on medical restrictions on tobacco in an ironical laugh:

You put the tin away, sniffing. You tap the other packet in your jacket, then shrug, take it out and open it. You bought these last night, too. What the fuck. Screw the world, bugger reality. Saint Hunter would understand; Uncle Warren wrote a song about it.

You light a cigarette, shake your head as you look out over the grey-enthroned city, and laugh. (313)

Perhaps because it is a narratological form that is less used than other more traditional modes, the 'you' narrative tends to attract attention. This is in part borne out by psychological research which assumes that readers tend to remember such passages better because they process them more deeply: 'there is a need for further exploration, but one possibility is that readers may become more attentive if they encounter such a form of address' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 173). This extra processing on the part of the reader can account for the extra involvement induced by the pronoun. With the second-person pronoun, it is as though the reader was *always already* involved. Crossing the conventional fictional borders, 'you' explicitly and continuously solicits the reader's complicit presence.

The ambiguities generated by the second person pronoun can also be measured if the readers choose to consider the relation between the narrator(s) and the protagonist(s), rather than the one between the protagonists-narrators and the reader, which has been my main focus here. 'You' being an address pronoun, not only may the interpretation according to which Cameron is the narrator in the 'you sections' emphatically addressing the murderer in an after-

the-event narrative be validated, but it could also be defended that in the last 'you' chapter Cameron is only the protagonist-referent whose post-traumatic life is related by a narrator addressing him with 'you'. Hence the versatility of the pronoun that can generate different readings depending on who it can refer to. I thus leave it open to the readers to decide on how they feel interpellated (or not) by the subtle use of person deixis in *Complicity*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from William McIlvanney's *Laidlaw* (1977) using some aspects of the second-person technique, there seem to be very few crime novels, if any, featuring a 'you narrator' who is also the criminal. Many thanks to Christiana Gregoriou for helping me to find this out.

<sup>2</sup> The novel inspired a film in 2000 called 'Complicity' ('Retribution' in the USA).

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<sup>3</sup> The same is true of 'we narrative' where the reference of the pronoun can vary within the same novel (see Jobert, 2014). For Brian Richardson, the flexibility of 'we' lies in its capacity to include or exclude groups of different sizes and of including or not the reader, 'we' being able to 'occupy' both the first and the third person (see Richardson, 2006: 13, 60).

<sup>4</sup> The referent of the pronoun 'I' can only be the one who says 'I' (see Wales, 1996: 69 for the one exception she could find to this fact).

<sup>5</sup> Questioning Benveniste's definition of 'you' as 'not I' (*non-je*) (Benveniste, 1966: 232).

<sup>6</sup> See also Scott McCracken's comment on *Complicity in Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (1998).

<sup>7</sup> The authors give the following definition: an imposter is 'a notionally X person DP [Determiner Phrase] that is grammatically Y person' (Collins & Postal, 2012: 5). Personal pronouns can fall in the category of pronominal imposters.

<sup>8</sup> For Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985: 182), any individual is an actor that makes stylistic choices in accordance with the social group he/she wants to be identified with. Social identities are expressed through language.

<sup>9</sup> For a thorough distinction between interior monologue and stream of consciousness on linguistic and pragmatic criteria, see de Mattia-Viviès, 2006: 183-216.

<sup>10</sup> Although Katie Wales does not exclusively refer to the use of pronouns in literature, the properties of the personal pronouns she highlights can apply to all genres. What varies are the pragmatic functions they tend to serve in particular contexts, like literature (see Gardelle & Sorlin, in press).

<sup>11</sup> Some passages seem to have something of the 'hypothetical you' (Richardson, 2006: 28-30) or the 'guide-book you' category where 'the actual addressee is described as doing things in a possible application of the instructions' (Fludernik, 1993: 235), even though they do not have the linguistic characteristics attributed to this use of 'you', that is 'the consistent use of the imperative, the frequent employment of the future tense, and the unambiguous distinction between the narrator and the narratee' (Richardson: 2006, 29).

<sup>12</sup> For an example of an explicit direct address to the reader, see Sorlin (in press).

<sup>13</sup> I had initially systematically chosen the feminine pronoun to refer to the reader as a conventional form that I traditionally use. But as one of the reviewer rightly pointed out, it sounded strange as the male protagonist would certainly construct a male complicit reader. The gender issue (and the study of the reception of the novel along gender lines) needs further developments that are beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>14</sup> In metaphors, 'identity' flickers. In 'Juliet is the sun' for instance, Juliet both is (metaphorically) a sun and isn't (literally). As Ricoeur points out, metaphor is the site of a tension between 'being' and 'not being'. 'Being like' encompasses 'being' and 'not being' (Ricoeur, 1975: 321).

<sup>15</sup> Cold cognition would be 'knowledge of' whereas hot cognition would be 'knowledge through': 'cold cognition' is 'simple *knowledge* of how one might *describe* the emotion, which is completely different from *experiencing* an emotion' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 201).

<sup>16</sup> The two first strands of this framework will be dealt with here (*Fundamental Scenario-Mapping Theory* and *the Rhetorical Focussing Principle*) leaving aside the third one (*Experientiality*) defined thus: 'the importance of embodiment and emotion as a basis for experiencing narrative, and how this is contained and manipulated by writers in accordance with the Rhetorical Focussing Principle' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 6), since the issue of emotions was tackled in the previous part.

<sup>17</sup> Other forms being 'accessing a new scenario, facilitating new mappings of current input onto a new' or 'carrying out other ad-hoc operations to accommodate the input' (Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 38).



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<sup>18</sup> I'm quoting here a stylistic device of attention grabbing tested by Sanford and Emmott (see Sanford & Emmott, 2012: 118).

<sup>19</sup> The term is here borrowed from cognitive-oriented theories of stylistics, where the notion of 'repair' implies the necessity for the reader to reassess her comprehension of previous scenes. In Text World Theory, Emmott speaks of 'frame repair' in her Contextual Frame Theory (Emmott 1997) and Gavins (2007), building on Emmott's work, speaks of 'world repair'.

<sup>20</sup> McInerney's canonical second-person novel *Bright Lights, Big City* seems also to bear out this hypothesis as it depicts a drug-addicted, somewhat depressed, protagonist-narrator as well.

<sup>21</sup> Many thanks to one of the reviewers for pointing out to me this possible interpretation of the second person pronoun in *Complicity*.